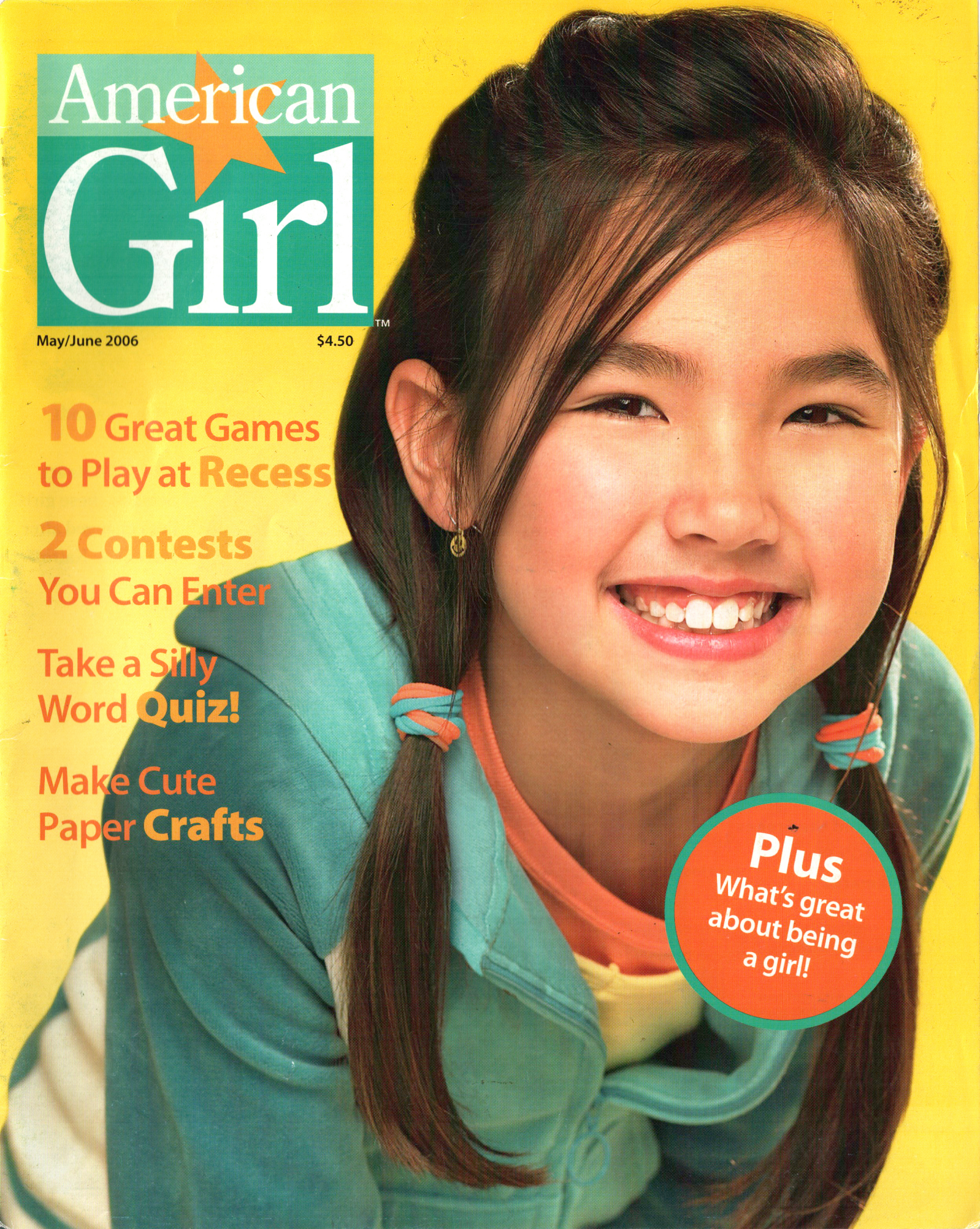

American Girl™
May/June 2006
$4.50
10 Great Games to Play at Recess
2 Contests You Can Enter
Take a Silly Word Quiz!
Make Cute Paper Crafts
Plus What's great about being a girl!

American Girl™

Volume 14, Number 3

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Visit americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine!
Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.

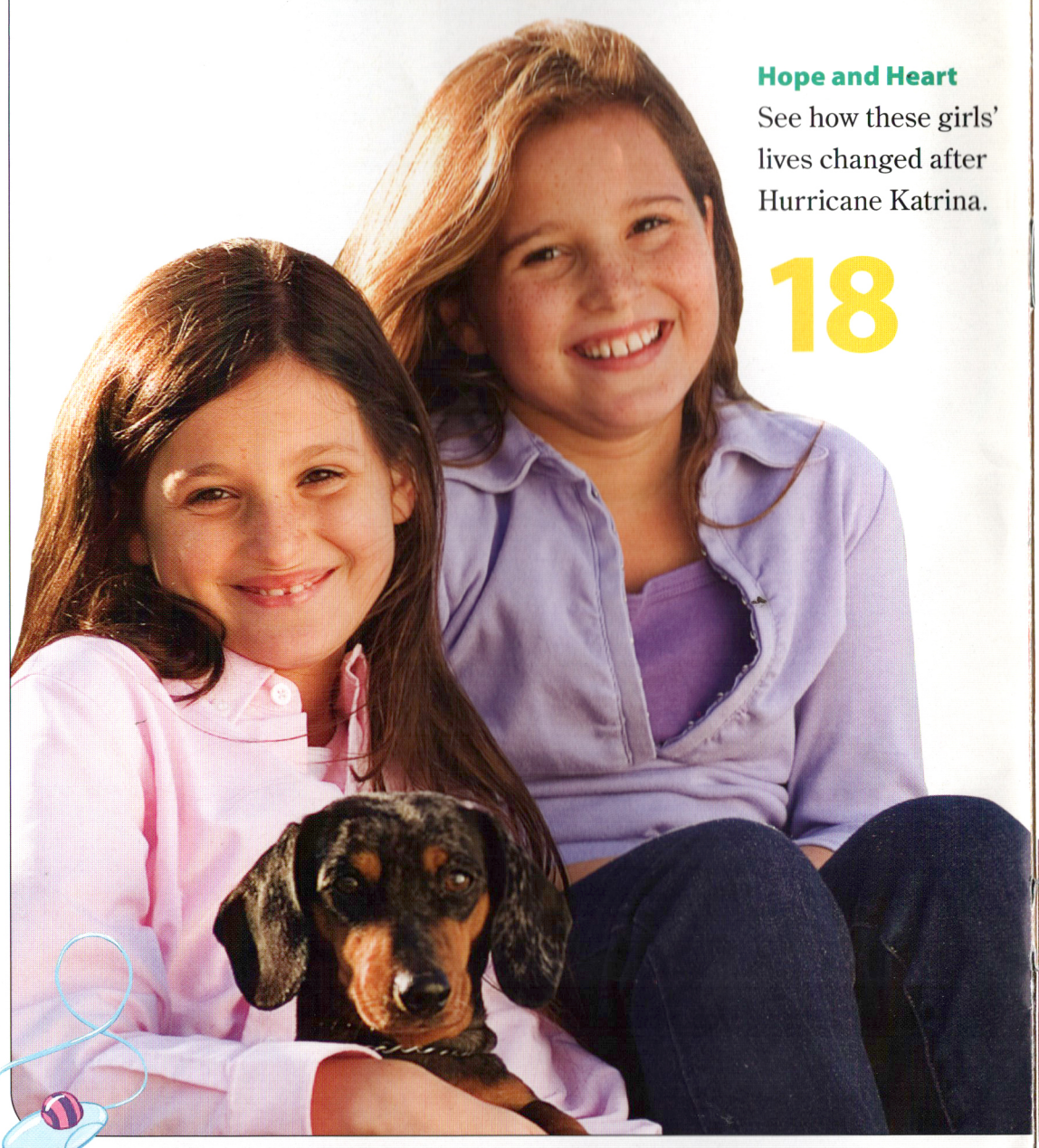
Boys as Friends
Get friendship tips and meet a girl who has a boy for a bud.

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Hope and Heart
See how these girls' lives changed after Hurricane Katrina.

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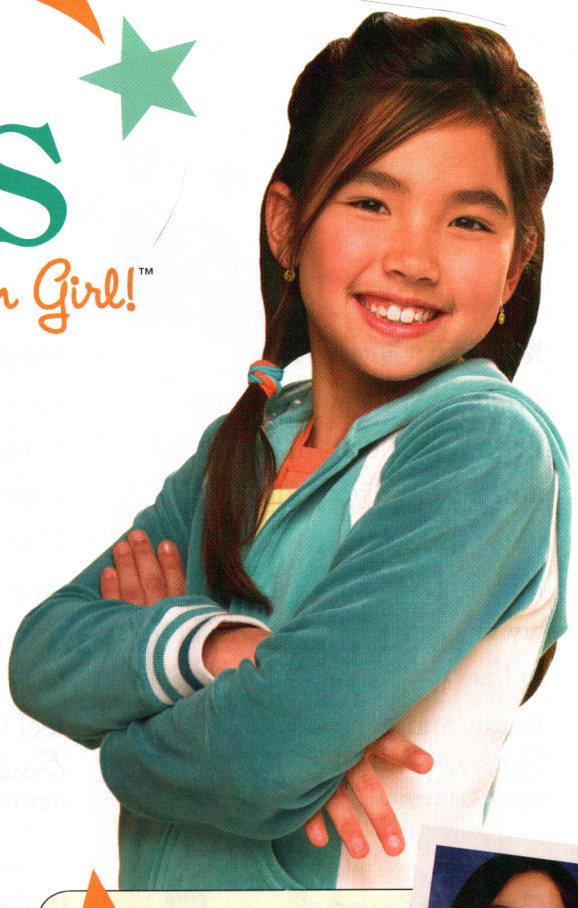
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Read the winner of our story contest—and enter the next contest yourself!

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Paper Petals
Pretty paper crafts to make and share

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About the Cover



Meet Miya K., age 9. Here's what she had to say about this issue.

Do you have any friends who are boys?

My brother. He's five years old. We play school a lot.

What's your favorite recess game?

Tag. I like being chased better than being It. I'm really good!

What sports do you like to do?

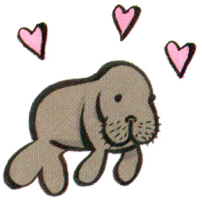
I'm on the swim team in the summer, but most of the time I swim for fun.

Miya K.

For more about our photo shoot, go to "Behind the Scenes" on page 49.

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Letters from You



Mad for Manatee

I really liked your January/February 2006 issue. I love all animals, and your stories and ideas were great. Thank you for telling me about the website www.savethemanatee.org. I fell in love with a manatee named Betsy, and I adopted her!

Sophie B.
Age 9, California



Grrreat Report

I used your idea to make my pet a report card. I typed it on my computer and showed it to my mom and my dog. My dog Chloe loved it because she got good grades!

Becca L.
Age 9, New York



Hoppy Day

In your January/February "Behind the Scenes," there was a petite pet named "Hoppy." I have a stuffed rabbit named Hoppy, and when I saw this in the magazine, it reminded me of all the times Hoppy made me feel better. You made my day!

Emily A.
Age 10, Texas



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@americangirl.com. Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 15, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by June 15 with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—M/J 06
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by June 15, 2006. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

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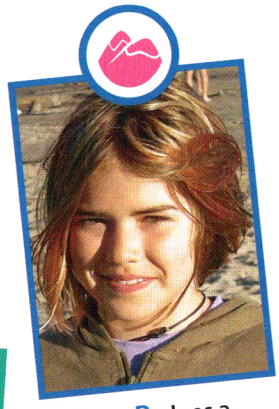
Girls EXPRESS

Go, Girls!

Read the clues and then turn the page to find out what unusual pastimes these girls enjoy to have fun and stay active.



Janira C. has a fan, but it never claps for her.



Sera B. does a figure eight, but she's not a skater.



Maggie B. loves to see pony goals.



Jessica W. works hard to lap the pack.



Lanae L. sits in a saddle, but it's not on a horse.

Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Food for Thought

Think of breakfast as brain food—it might make you smarter! Researchers found that kids who eat breakfast tend to score higher on tests and can concentrate better in school. For a great breakfast recipe, turn to page 7.

Buzzword

brio

How to say it: BREE-oh

What it means: liveliness or spirit

One way to use it: In the locker room after the game, the winning Rattlers were bursting with brio.



The buzzword is tucked into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? The answer is on page 42.

Find It!

Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Flamenco dancing



How she got started: The dance is pronounced fluh-MENK-oh. "When I was five, I heard about flamenco, and I wanted to try it. We learn footwork and arm movements, and we wear skirts and shawls."

What it's like: "I get to learn new things from every teacher. Sometimes it's a different step, and sometimes it's a different way to do a step that I already know. Flamenco makes me feel like I can express myself."

What it takes: "Sometimes I try, but I don't get it. I try again until I get it. Sometimes I leave practice tired because the dancing is really energetic."

She has a fan? Janira performs with a fan in a *guajira*, or fan dance. (Say it: wah-HEE-dah.)

Inline speed skating



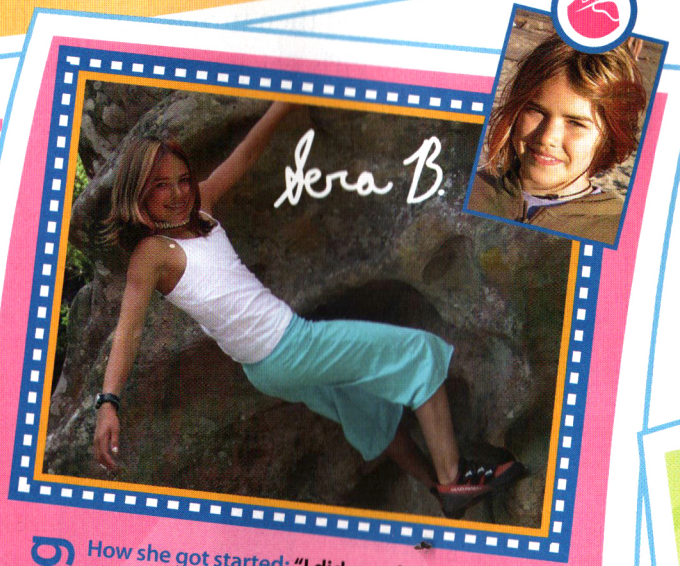
How she got started: "My sister and I used to roller-skate together for hours after school at the rink. It was so fun. I liked watching the speed skaters practice and got interested in joining the team."

What it's like: "My favorite part of speed skating is the wind in my face. I also love going as fast as I can. And it's fun to skate with my friends."

What it takes: "The most important thing in speed skating is to be able to pay attention to what you're doing and where you're going."

What's "lap the pack"? It's a drill in which a skater has to race past everybody else—the pack—and then catch up with the last person.

Rock climbing

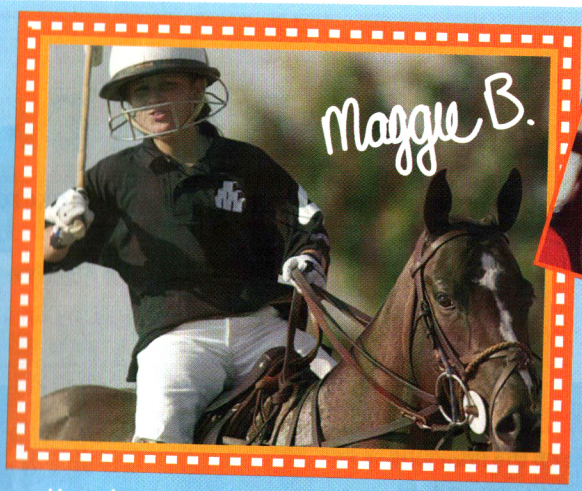


How she got started: "I did a rock-climbing camp. When my teacher said I was really good for a beginner, I signed up for more."

What it's like: "Rock climbing is just the way it sounds: climbing rocks. We do it indoors on man-made rocks with a padded mat underneath or outdoors on real rocks. We use ropes when we climb higher than 12 feet, but in this photo I'm bouldering, which is climbing a boulder without a rope."

What it takes: "What makes me want to get to the top of the rocks is the challenge. If it's a climb I've wanted to do for a long time, I'll start the climb, get ahold of a good rock, take a couple of deep breaths and say, 'I can do it.'"

What's the figure eight? It's a knot that climbers use.





Polo

How she got started: "Every winter my family (and our horses) move from Wyoming to Florida because of my dad's hobby as a polo player. Also, my mom breeds and trains polo ponies."

What it's like: "Polo is like hockey from horseback. It's played on an outdoor field that is bigger than nine football fields. We use mallets to try to score goals from horseback by hitting a small white ball through the goalposts at either end of the field."

What it takes: "It's very hard to balance on a galloping horse when you have to stand up and hit the ball."

What's a pony goal? That's when the horse kicks the ball through the goal by accident. It still counts as a point!





Unicycling

How she got started: "My brothers and my dad started unicycling, and my neighbor found a smaller unicycle my size at a yard sale. I was really determined to learn how to ride it, and my dad and my brothers were really encouraging."

What it's like: "It really surprised me how fun it was. When you're on the unicycle and you're pedaling across the cement, it feels like you're gliding through the air."

What it takes: "You have to be willing to fall a lot of times before you can get even a couple of feet. It takes a lot of determination."

What's the saddle? "Saddle" is the name for the seat on a unicycle.

Creative Corner



AG Poll

In our January/February issue, we asked you which talent you wished would make you famous. Here's what you said:

- Acting 134
- Singing 126
- Dancing 50
- Playing an instrument 25
- Painting 21
- Writing 53
- Designing clothing 59

Next question:

When it comes to sports, what's your ideal role? Circle your choice.

- Marvelous mascot
- Praised player
- Fabulous fan
- Confident captain

Cut out your answer and mail it to us with your first and last name, address, and birth date.

Spirit Scrunchie

Turn a plain hair elastic into a fun display of school spirit. Using fleece in your school colors, cut about 12 strips measuring 1 inch by 6 inches. Tie fleece strips in knots around a hair elastic. Put the fluffy scrunchie around a ponytail. Go team!



Photos: Chris Hynes

Help Wanted!

Let's play! We want to hear about your favorite active game. It can be a twist on an old favorite such as tag or a fun new activity you made up yourself. It can be an indoor or outdoor game for any season. Make sure to include the rules, and tell us what makes your game so much fun. Send your game, along with your name and address, to the address on page 2.



Stretch and Smile

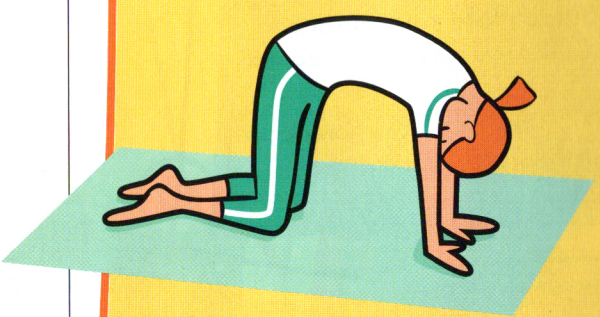
Feel great with these easy, yoga-inspired exercises.

Just Breathe

Lie flat on the floor with your legs outstretched, your arms by your sides, and your eyes closed. Breathe in through your nose, slowly filling your lungs with as much air as they can hold, and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Repeat five times.

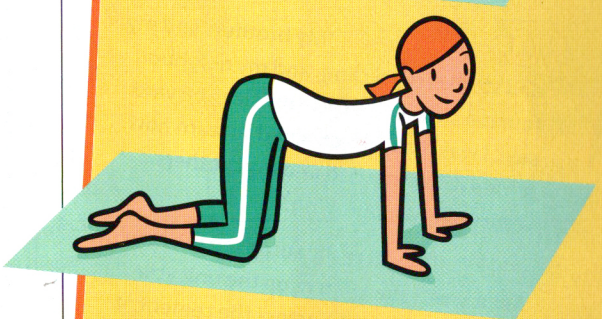


Here's a tip: "Just Breathe" can help you de-stress during the day, even if you can't lie down to do it.



Cat Curl

Roll over onto your belly, and push up onto all fours, like a cat. Slowly drop your head and make your back rounded, inhaling. Then slowly lift your head and your "tail" as you exhale. Repeat five times.



Rock and Roll

Now roll over onto your back. Bring your knees up to your chest and hug them to you. Rock as slowly as you can from side to side, focusing on stretching your back. Repeat five times to each side. Now you're ready to get up and go!



AG Art Gallery

Check out this artwork from readers like you.

Great Strides





Katy C.
Age 14, Texas

Ballet Dreams





Shelby O.
Age 11, Washington

Star Smoothie

This fruity treat doesn't just taste great—it's good for you, too!

½ cup orange juice
½ cup peach yogurt
½ cup crushed pineapple
½ banana
2 ice cubes

Combine ingredients in a blender. Ask an adult to process at low speed for 15 seconds and then blend to desired thickness. Delish!

Shining Star

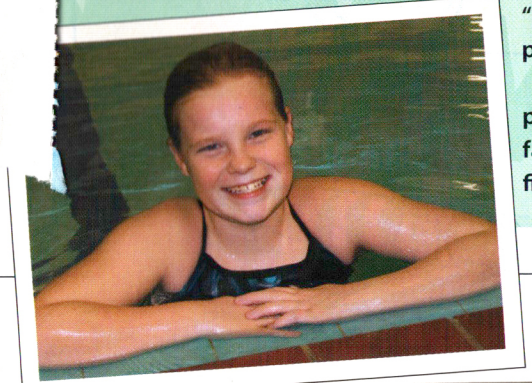
When Emily S. was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis, a lung disease, she wanted to do something to help others with the disease.

Emily loved to swim, so she decided to do a swim-a-thon, which she called Laps for CF. She and her family sent letters to friends and extended family, asking them to donate money for each lap Emily swam at the event.

Her goal was $3,000. But after three swim-a-thons and hundreds of laps, Emily has raised more than $300,000 to pay for research and to help people with cystic fibrosis. "We've had a huge response from people wanting to help," she says.

The 13-year-old Alabama girl is planning future swim-a-thons. So far, there is no cure for cystic fibrosis. But Emily works hard, hoping that the money she raises can help kick the disease.

"It just makes me feel awesome because I know this money is helping people, and it's going to make a difference."



You can shine, too. May is National CF Awareness Month. You can join a local walk-a-thon to help raise money and awareness. To learn more, ask a parent to visit cff.org/great_strides.

Creative Critters

We give these school-supply creatures an A+!





Eraser Elephant Ellie

Maria T.
Age 9, New Jersey



Paper-clip Perm Penelope

Kendal B.
Age 11, Illinois



Suzy the Sharp Snail

Kaleigh R.
Age 11, Michigan

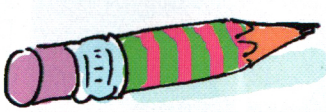






Diskette Denise

Diva H.
Age 12, New Jersey



Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer



Caterpillar Carley

Hanna M.
Age 12, Oregon



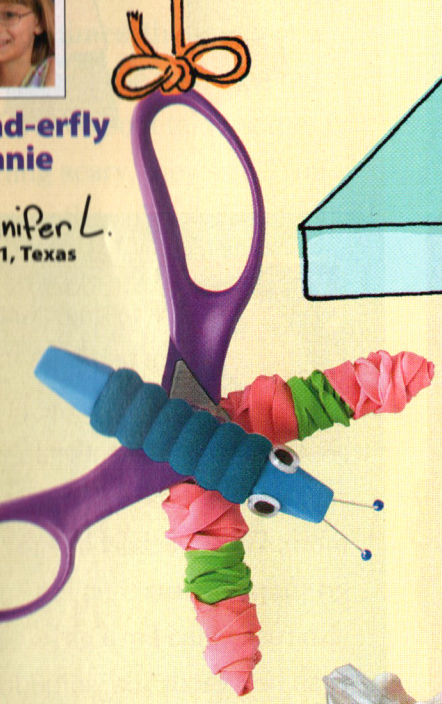
Ramona the Remover

Shana M.
Age 12, Colorado



Band-erfly Bonnie

Jennifer L.
Age 11, Texas





Colorful Chrissy

Ashley B.
Age 12, Colorado

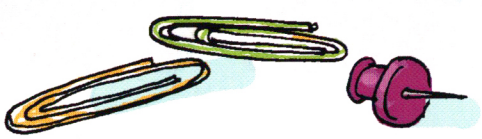


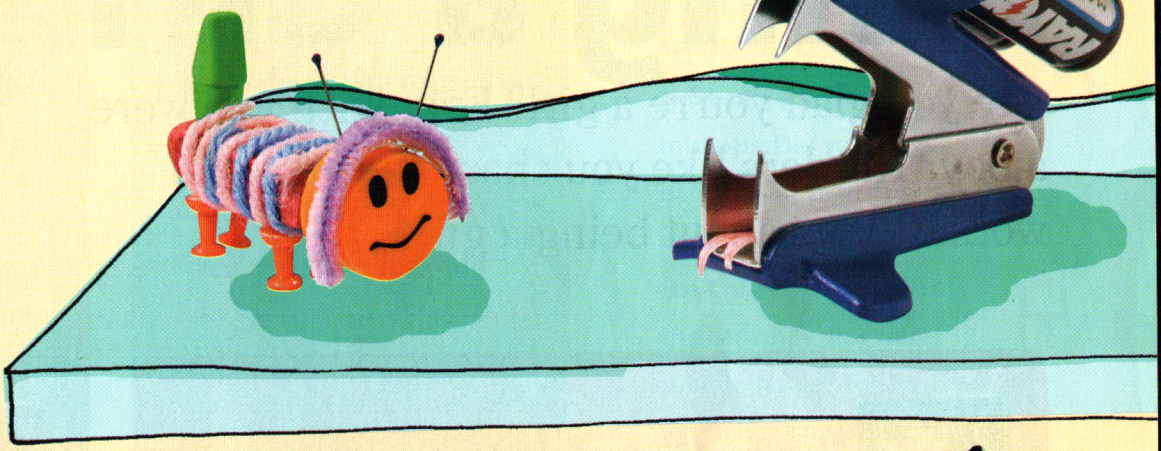




Tape-dispenser Taylor

Holly B.
Age 10, Illinois







New Contest: Create a winter holiday drink.

Your recipe can be hot or cold, slushy or creamy, sweet or sour. Think about your favorite winter flavors: peppermint, apple, cinnamon, cranberry, chocolate, pumpkin, ginger, or whatever else you like. Give your drink a clever name, too! Send your recipe to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. Deadline: June 10, 2006. Winners will appear in the November/December 2006 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

Being a Girl

Are you glad you're a girl? Ever wish you were a boy? Readers like you share the best and worst things about being a girl.





I think the best part about being a girl is that we can be whoever we want. Some girls love sports, some love nail polish, and some love both! And it's considered totally normal. A lot of times boys get teased for not acting the way they're "supposed" to act. I'm glad I'm a girl!



Lauren S.
Age 12, Minnesota



The best part of being a girl for me is the special relationship I have with my mom. We especially like to go shopping together. I'm also really glad I'm a girl so I can be a mom, too, someday.

Christina D.
Age 10, New York





I don't know about other people, but I love being a girl. There is nothing a boy can do that a girl can't do, except go places without a shirt on and go to the boys' bathroom. But I don't want to do those things anyway!

Sabrina L.
Age 10, California



I love being a girl! You get to wear cool clothes, put on makeup, and wear lip gloss. Sometimes I wish I were a boy so that I could get dirty when I play without my girlfriends giving me a hard time about it.

Amber G.
Age 10, Ohio



I like being a girl because of the "ladies first" rule. Sometimes, though, my brothers use it against me. If we're about to do something scary, they say, "You know the rule—ladies first!"

Dessa P.
Age 12, Oklahoma

Big Truth

Most of you said you're glad you're girls!



For the most part, I'm glad I'm a girl. But when I have to wash my hair, I wish I were a boy. I have really thick and curly hair and it takes forever to dry. My dad's and brother's hair is short and doesn't take any time at all to dry!

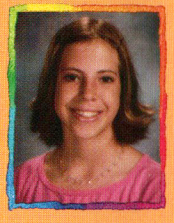
Melisse C.
Age 11, Minnesota





To me, the worst part about being a girl is that sometimes girls can be very mean to each other. I don't think boys are like that. Boys just let everything go, but girls hang on to it and hold grudges.

Catharine G.
Age 12, Iowa



Being a girl is tough! There is always at least one boy who will say, "You can't play. You're a girl." But you have to tell yourself that you can do whatever you want to do no matter what your gender is.

Rhianna W.
Age 12, Utah

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Holiday mishaps. Did your dog eat the pumpkin pie while no one was looking? Did the Christmas tree fall off the car while you were driving home? Tell us about the funny thing that happened—that wasn't supposed to happen—over the holidays.

Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: June 7, 2006. Some answers will appear in the November/December 2006 issue. ✦



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Recess Challenge!

Check the box next to each challenge you meet. See if you can do them all before the school year is over!



White Cross Productions/Getty Images

Scream Team

☐ Line up side by side along one end of a big field. On "Go," each player yells as loudly as she can while she runs toward the opposite side of the field. Here's the catch—you may only run as long as you can yell! When you run out of breath, stop. See who can go the farthest—and scream the loudest!

Team Tag

Players lie on their stomachs, side by side with a partner. The pairs of players line up to form a large circle on the ground (like a clock), facing the center. One player is It, and another player starts the game by running up to a pair and lying down next to one of the partners, before being tagged by It. The partner on the other side of that pair must then get up and run and find a new spot, again while trying not to be tagged by It. If the person who is It tags the runner, they reverse roles.



Jump Around

Hold a jump-rope marathon for all your friends. See who can jump the longest, who can do double Dutch, and who can turn the rope twice on one jump.



Six-Legged Monster

Line up in teams of three. On "Go," the first and last person on each team start stepping with their right foot, and the middle person steps with her left foot. Try to keep in step while using alternate feet, and make your way across the playground. After you practice, challenge other six-legged monsters to a race!

Rainbow Tag

Choose a home base. One player is It. The other players are the Rainbow. They each think of a color to be—without saying their color out loud. The person who is It calls out a color. When a player's color is called, she runs for the base, and It tries to catch her. If she reaches the base without getting tagged, she chooses another color and rejoins the Rainbow. If she is caught, she's out.

Crazy Course

Decide on an obstacle course and see how quickly you can get through it. Go across the monkey bars, run to the swings and pump your legs back and forth 20 times, run up the stairs to the slide, go down the slide, and leap to the finish line. Challenge your friends, too!



Alistair Berg/Getty Images Win It photo: Chris Hynes Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Ribbon Row

All the players but one stand in a single-file row or line. Each player puts her hands on the shoulders of the player in front of her to make a "ribbon." The player not in the ribbon is It. It chases the last person in the ribbon and tries to catch her. The ribbon twists and turns (and runs!) to get away. When It finally catches the last person on the ribbon, she puts her hands on that girl's shoulders, and the girl at the front of the ribbon becomes It.

Kitty Corner

You need five players to play this game. Four people make a square with one person at each corner. The fifth person stands in the middle. She is "Kitty"—she wants a corner, too! The object of the game is to change places without letting Kitty get a corner. When Kitty yells "Change!" all the players scramble to change corners. As they change, Kitty tries to run to an empty corner. Whoever is left without a corner becomes Kitty.

Frisbee Fanatics!

Use a Frisbee instead of a ball to play modified versions of football, baseball, or soccer.

Monkey in the Middle

One person is the monkey and she sits on the ground in the center of a circle. The other players run, skip, or dance around the monkey, chanting, "Monkey in the middle, you can't catch me!" The monkey has to try to catch someone without leaving her spot. The person who's caught becomes the next monkey.

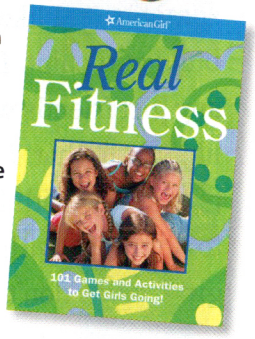


Simon Watson/Getty Images

WIN IT!

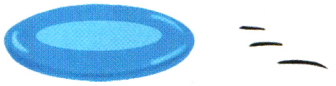


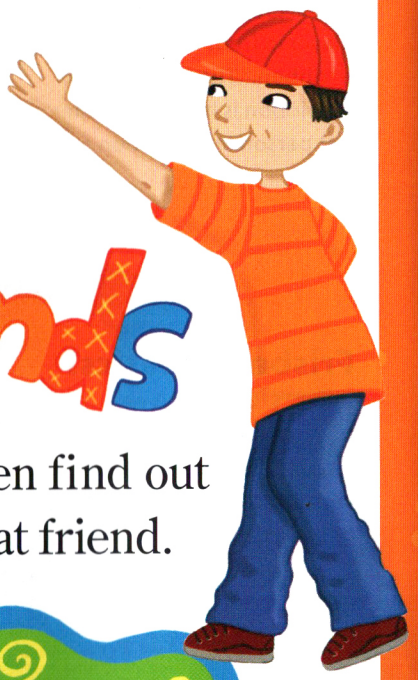
Win this bag filled with goodies to boost your brio and get you moving! More great ideas for getting active can be found in the book *Real Fitness*. ★



Kids should get 60 minutes of exercise per day. Running around at recess counts!

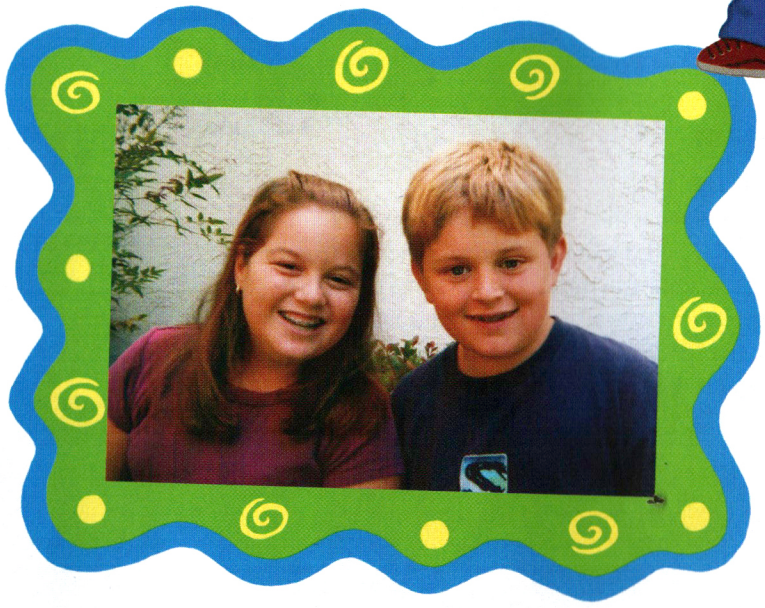






Boys as Friends

Meet a girl whose good friend is a boy. Then find out if you know a boy who might make a great friend.



Becca and Kyle, both age 12, met in kindergarten and have been good friends ever since. We asked Becca some questions about what it's like being good friends with a boy.

AG: What is different about having Kyle as a friend?
Becca: Kyle loves to build things. He even built a tree house where we hang out sometimes. I like to help him build and paint. I don't have any girl friends who would like doing that. I also like to play sports with Kyle. It's fun to do things with him that my girl friends don't like to do.

AG: Is there anything you disagree on?
Becca: Yes. Kyle loves NASCAR and he doesn't understand why I don't.

AG: Do you ever get teased?
Becca: Yes. Sometimes when I'm at sleepovers my friends and I will start talking about boys. Before you know it someone is asking me, "Becca, do you like Kyle?" I just say, "No, he's just a good friend." It's not a big deal to me, so I try not to make it a big deal to anyone else.

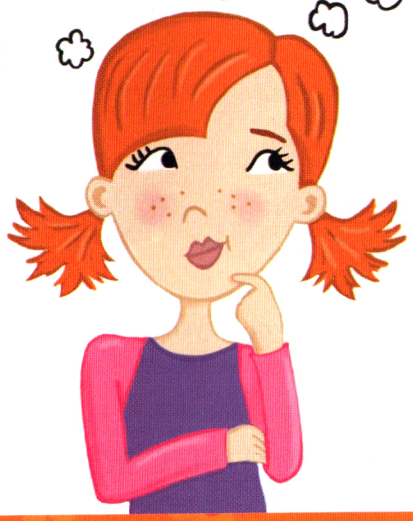
Pal Potential

Think of a boy you know who could be a good friend. Answer **yes** or **no** to the following questions.



1. Do you feel like you can be yourself around him?
- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

2. Do you have anything in common?
- ❑ yes
- ❑ no



3. Is he easy to talk to?
- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

4. Does he treat his other friends the way you want to be treated?
- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

How did you answer?

If you answered "yes" to more than one question, he might be a good friend for you. Give him a chance to be your bud.

Oh, Boy!

Follow these **do's** and **don'ts** about having a friendship with a boy.

Do's

* Do have a plan for what to say if others tease you.
* Do keep an open mind about having a friendship with a boy.

Don'ts

* Don't tease other girls who have boys as friends.
* Don't let what others think get in the way of a great friendship.

Having a boy as a friend is great because you get to see things from his point of view. ★



Illustrations: Cathi Mingus

Hope & Heart

by Shannon Payette Seip

Last summer, Hurricane Katrina swept through the southern United States, flooding cities and forcing families to flee. You'll meet girls who escaped from the dangerous storm and ended up far from home. You'll also hear from girls who decided to help the storm's victims.



Photo: Bill Cramer Illustrations: Janell Genovese



DeAndranae, center, hangs out with relatives.

Finding Family

Although DeAndranae M. lost nearly everything in Hurricane Katrina, she was surrounded by one thing she didn't lose—her family.

DeAndranae, her little brother, and her mom fled their Louisiana home and were living in a hotel room. Soon after, DeAndranae's aunt and uncle invited every relative affected by the hurricane to stay at their house in Pennsylvania.

It was a long drive but worth every minute. "I was excited because we didn't have to stay in a hotel anymore. And they had a pool," says DeAndranae, 9.

But hers wasn't the only family to make its way to Pennsylvania. Fifty relatives ended up staying at the house! "More people kept coming and coming," DeAndranae exclaims.

Having more than a dozen kids in the house meant a lot of fun to go around. "We didn't get bored," says DeAndranae.

But the house did get crowded, especially at bath time, since there were only two bathtubs. All 50 relatives somehow found places to sleep—from couches to rollaway cots.

With so many people around, DeAndranae always had someone to talk to when she got lonely for home. And besides, "with more people around, there's more love in the house."



Sarah, left, and Rachel with Kool-Aid.

Lost and Found

Sarah and Rachel C. had to leave a lot behind when they evacuated their home in Louisiana. But the hardest part was leaving behind their two dogs, Kool-Aid and Kiki.

The Louisiana family ended up fleeing to Virginia. "It was really hard because I missed my dogs," says Rachel, 10.

One day, their luck changed. A volunteer learned of Sarah and Rachel's story and went to retrieve Kool-Aid and Kiki.

But when he got to the shelter in Louisiana, there was good news and bad news. Kool-Aid was alive and well, but Kiki had escaped and was missing.

Rachel and Sarah absorbed the news with mixed emotions. "When I saw Kool-Aid I was so excited," remembers Sarah, 9. "I went inside and got a stroller and walked her around like old times."

But life isn't the same with Kiki missing. "I think she's trying to find her way back home," Rachel says.

"I had a dream that somebody found Kiki and they drove all the way here to bring her to us. It seemed so real," says Sarah. "She's probably scared right now. I still have hope she's O.K."

"I still have hope."

Photo: Chip Mitchell



Tyrielle, in the pink shirt, is reunited with her family at an airport in Michigan. The family now lives in Georgia.

Photo: Brandy Baker / The Detroit News

Reunited

Tyrielle S. was visiting her grandmother for the weekend when they had to flee Hurricane Katrina's fierce rains and winds. "I was nervous because I didn't know whether my mom was safe," recalls Tyrielle, who is from Louisiana.

Worse yet, the phone was always busy when Tyrielle tried to call her mom. She had no way of finding out if her family had survived, or to tell them that she and her grandma were fleeing to Arkansas. "I thought my mom would be worried," says Tyrielle, 12.

Tyrielle had only her purse, her CD player, and some clothes with her in her grandma's car. But she wasn't complaining: "I was happy to be going somewhere safe."

Their first stop was a shelter in Arkansas. "It smelled disgusting," remembers Tyrielle. "But I was thankful to take a shower and get something to eat."

For a few long weeks, Tyrielle kept trying to call her mom, but the lines were always busy. "I missed my mom's Salisbury steak and playing outside with my little sisters and brother," admits the survivor, who spent her days handing out supplies to other hurricane victims. "My mom and I are very close. I didn't know what I'd do without my mom. But I had my grandma with me. So I felt safe."

Finally, Tyrielle got to hear her mom's voice on the other end of the telephone. It turns out her family had fled to Michigan. "I was excited to hear my mom's voice. I told her I loved her," recalls Tyrielle. "I was relieved she was O.K."

Soon after their call, Tyrielle flew to Michigan to reunite with her family. "I ran to them and hugged them," remembers Tyrielle. "I have a new appreciation for family. Without them I wouldn't be who I am."

"I have a new appreciation for family."



Helping **Hands** When these girls learned about the disaster, they sprang into action.

Animal Aid



When Katie P. heard how people had to abandon their pets in the storm, the Illinois girl thought of her own two cats and dog. "They're my favorite things in the world," says Katie, 12.

Katie knew that several organizations were assisting people. She decided to focus on helping pets that were lost in the storm.

Katie organized a drink stand and bake sale, and she set up shop in front of her house. She made a huge banner that explained her compassionate cause.

The Illinois girl was shocked at the response. "So many people didn't buy anything—they just dropped in $20 bills!"

Katie ended up raising $400. She gave most of the money to a local shelter, which housed hurricane pets until they could be adopted.

"I always want to help others," Katie says. "Through this I learned that I can do anything."



"Through this I learned that I can do anything."

Scouts' Honor



Nyanna A.'s first troop meeting after the hurricane was unlike any other. "Everyone felt bad and wanted to help," recalls the Girl Scout, whose troop is in Texas—a state that was safe from the storm.

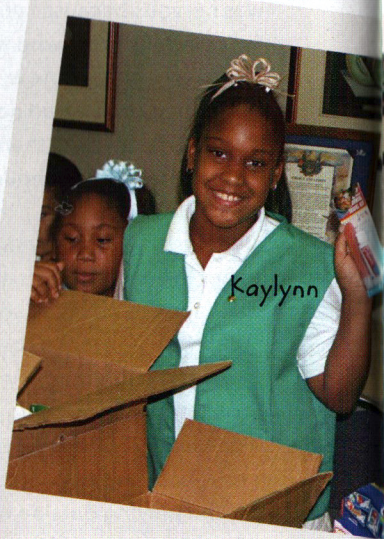
The troop voted to donate $265 they had earned from cookie sales to help the victims. They also raked through their bedrooms to fill boxes with their personal clothes, toys, and supplies.

"I donated one of my teddy bears that my grandma gave me," says Nyanna, age 9. "It was very important to me, but I thought it would be better to give it to the victims because they had nothing."

The Scouts also pitched in at a local facility boxing supplies for survivors. They stood in an assembly line to fill the containers with everything from toothbrushes to paper plates. "I hope the victims felt good that people cared for them," Nyanna says.

"I was proud of how we worked for hours," says Kaylynn G., another member of the troop.

These girls also felt a new appreciation for their troop. "To be a Girl Scout means to help people at all times," explains Kaylynn, 10. "I was proud to be a Girl Scout during this time."

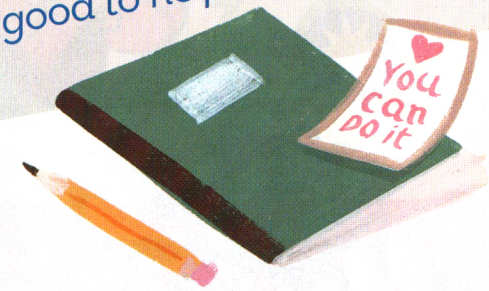


"To be a Girl Scout means to help people at all times."



Photo: Danuta Ottinowksi/PEOPLE

"I've learned that it feels really good to help other people."



Pack Action

Melissa, Jenna, and Jackie K. were heartbroken to watch news reports about the hurricane from their home in Maryland. "If I had to leave my home, I would be devastated," Jenna, 9, sympathizes.

The girls got the idea to start Project Backpack. They wanted people to donate backpacks stuffed with toys, games, school supplies, and personal notes offering hope and cheer to kids affected by Hurricane Katrina.

"A backpack is something that you cherish," says Melissa, 12, who thought kids in shelters would be bored without something to do. "We wanted to give kids what they left behind."

With the help of their parents, the Maryland sisters asked local families to bring the backpacks to their schools. Pretty soon, people across the country heard about Project Backpack and wanted to donate.

The sisters' goal was 1,000 backpacks, but they ended up collecting more than 40,000! "It was exciting," Jenna says proudly.

Melissa hopes that if the roles were reversed, other girls would do whatever they could to help her. "I've learned that it feels really good to help other people, especially when they're in need."



You Can Help, Too.

In your AG cover contest entries, hundreds of you suggested that we write about girls who were affected by the Hurricane Katrina disaster. We planned these stories right after the storm hit, so we're glad to know that we're writing what you want!

Many of you also suggested that we include ways for girls like you to help others in need. Here are some things to keep in mind when you're planning a benefit:

Choosing a charity

Ask a parent or adult at school or church to help you find a place where the money you raise will be put to good use. The charity that you choose also might be able to tell you what items are needed.

Getting started

Figure out what you're good at, and then plan a fund-raiser around it. As you just read, even setting up a bake sale at your house can make a big difference. Selling crafts or baked goods and doing chores in your neighborhood are good ways to raise money for a cause. You also can collect items to donate to those in need.

Lending a hand

Ask your friends and a trusted adult to help with your project. The more hands to help, the better. ★

Paper Petals

by Patricia Doherty

Make pretty projects with paper to give as gifts on Mother's Day or to keep for yourself!

Dinky Daisies

To brighten someone's day, punch out a bitty bouquet.

You will need:

- **An adult to help you**
- **Tiny flower paper punch**
- **Hole punch**
- **Colored paper or vellum**
- **Double-stick tape**
- **Scissors**
- **Green jewelry wire**
- **Tiny bottle or jar**

Punch out a flower and a circle from paper or vellum. Tape the circle to the flower. Ask an adult to help you cut wire for a stem. At one end of the wire, make a small bend. Tape the bend underneath the flower. Make more flowers, and slip them into a tiny bottle or jar for a vase.



Tip: Keep stems straight or curl them around a pencil.

Punch Jewelry

Put paper punches to work making perfect jewelry pieces.

You will need:

- Card stock
- Flower punch
- Micro hole punch
- Beading cord
- Scissors
- Craft glue

Punch out flowers from card stock. In the center of each flower, punch 2 holes, spaced apart. Thread beading cord through the flowers, and slide them into position along the cord. Cut the cord to fit on your wrist. To secure it, tie a double knot in the ends, and dab craft glue onto the knot. Let dry.



Tip: Try a larger or smaller flower punch. Tape the flowers together before punching beading holes.

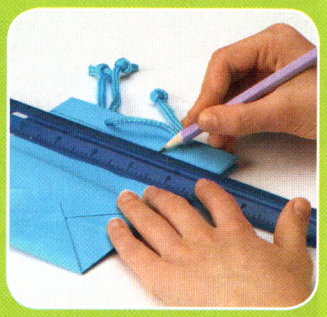
Photos: Chris Hynes, Radlund Photography. Monica Skeisvoll Styling: Patricia Doherty

Coin Purse

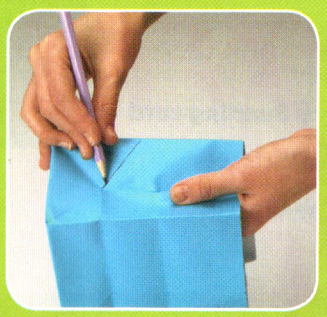
Keep coins, cards, or candy in this petite purse.

You will need:

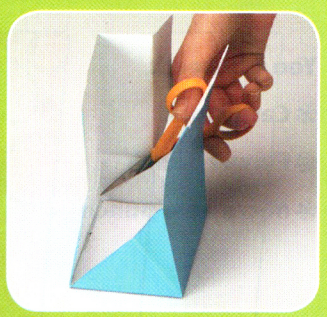
- Lunch bag or gift bag
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Scissors



1 Lay bag with flap side up. Draw a line across bag 2¼ inches from flap, and then cut off the top.

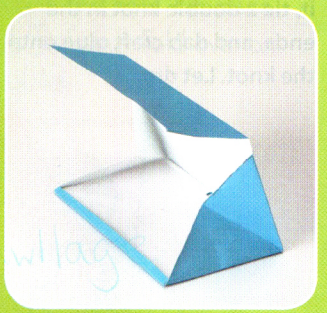


2 Open bag and lightly draw a line along fold to make a large triangle on each side, as shown.



3 Cut down side edge of bag to triangle. Cut off side, leaving triangle as shown. Repeat for opposite side.





4 Cut off front of bag, leaving a tiny edge. Fold and decorate. Slip bag under a heavy book until bag lies flat.

Love Light

Turn on this lamp for a little glow.

You will need:

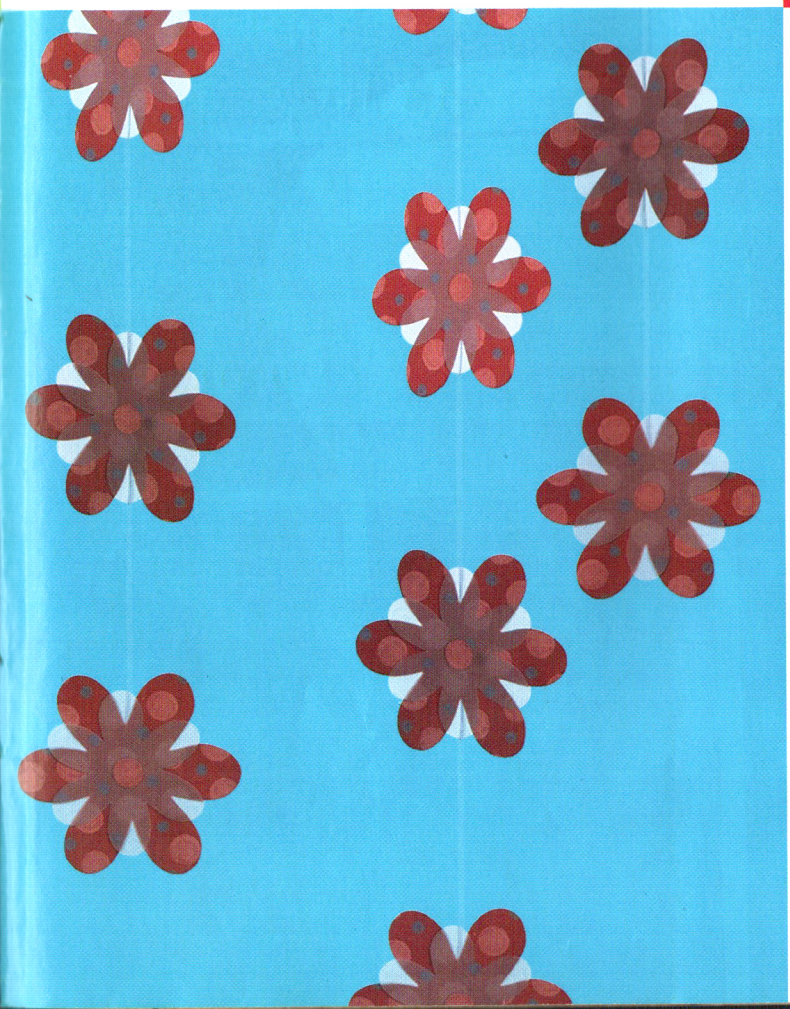
- Tape measure
- Push light
- Rice paper and/or card stock
- Scissors
- Double-stick tape

Measure around a push light, then measure and cut your paper length so that it's one inch longer. Lay the paper shade flat to tape paper shapes onto it, if desired. Press a strip of tape along the vertical edge of the shade, then bend the shade back around the push light to tape closed.



Tip: Look for push lights at home-supply and discount stores.





Mod Mobile

Put a spin on an old space with a mobile.

You will need:

- Flower stencils
  Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" for flower stencils.
- Pencil
- Card stock
- Scissors
- Vellum
- Double-stick tape
- Large circle punch
- Embroidery floss

Trace the large flower stencil onto card stock, and cut out the flower. Trace the small flower stencil onto vellum, and cut out the flower. Tape one vellum flower to each card flower. Punch or cut out circles, and tape one to each flower center. Tape a strand of floss onto the back of each flower. To hide the tape, press scrap paper over the sticky tape. Make more flowers. Hang mobile on a curtain rod in your room.

Locker Frame

Find 1-2-3 fun ways to use a locker frame.

You will need:

- Pretty paper
- Thick cardboard or art board
- Tape
- 1/4-inch-wide flat elastic
- Stapler
- Scissors
- Heavy adhesive magnetic strip



1 Wrap a piece of colored paper around a cardboard rectangle and secure with tape. Tightly wrap elastic around rectangle so that it overlaps itself. Slide elastic off board.



2 Staple overlap of elastic, trim it, and slide it back onto frame. Repeat with one or more elastic pieces as shown below. Press magnetic strip onto back of cardboard. Slip in flowers, a photo, or a plastic mirror.



Spray Sachets

Spritz fragrance on paper cutouts for scented closets and drawers.

You will need:

- **Large flower stencil**
  Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" for flower stencils.
- **Pencil**
- **Card stock**
- **Scissors**
- **Paper punch**
- **Ribbon**
- **Wax paper**
- **Fragrance**

Trace the large flower stencil onto card stock, and cut it out. Try squares and other shapes, too! Punch a hole at the top of each cutout. Thread on a ribbon, and tie the ribbon into a bow. Lay the cutouts on wax paper, then spritz lightly with fragrance. Let dry. Hang in a closet or place in a dresser drawer. *



These pretty paper projects and more can be found in the book *Paper Fun!*



Quiz

Take a Squiz!

Readers sent in the funny new words on the opposite page. Use them to complete each made-up sentence in our squiz (silly quiz).

By Elena B., OLIVIA V., Emily P., Christan T., Jordan O., Cassie P., Molly G., Danielle S., Courtney R., and Sophia C.

1. Kerri sighed. It had already taken forever to brush the snarls and tangles out of her hair, but there was still one stubborn Snagle hiding in the back.

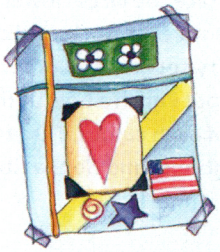




2. Grace's mom kept telling her not to blow bubbles with her gum, insisting that the bubbles would pop all over her face. And now here Grace was, covered with Flubbabubba.

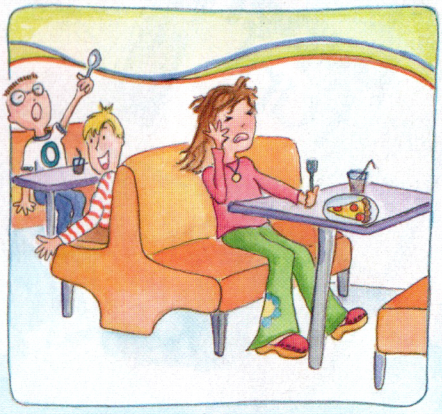
3. Instead of cutting through the gym to get to the cafeteria, Hannah decided to go the long way by the library. After all, she thought, she could use the extracise.

4. Kirstie had a whole notebook of drawings and doodles, so



she decided to make a collage out of all the art. It turned out great, so she decided to hang the dawlage inside her locker.

5. Janie hated going to the pizza parlor because all the screaming kids drove her nuts. That place was so annoisy!

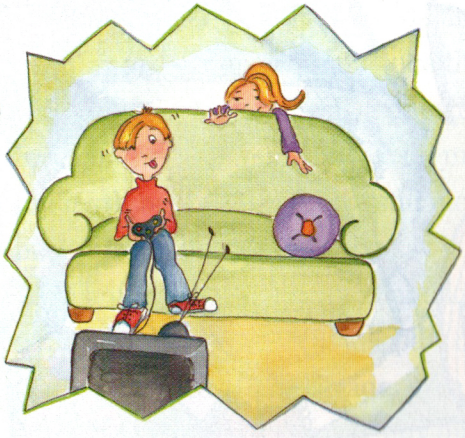


Illustrations: Monica Lee

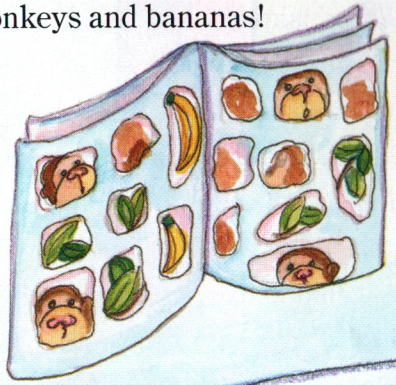
6. Taylor rushed in from the cold and was horrified when she looked down. All over the hall, there was one Slushcube after another that had fallen from the bottoms of her boots.



7. If you're looking for Emma's brother, you can always find him in the basement playing video games. He's such a videotato.



8. Have you seen Caitlyn's stickellection? She has a complete set of tropical stickers, complete with monkeys and bananas!



9. It had been snowing for hours, and when Sarah Rose looked out her window, the yard looked so peaceful and snowrene.

10. It was hard for Maddy to share a room with her sister. Maddy liked to have all her stuff out where she could see it, but Rachel was a total cleaniac and always wanted everything put away. ★



Funny word choices:

~~videotato~~
~~annoisy~~
~~flubbabubba~~
~~snangle~~
snowrene
~~drawllage~~
~~extracise~~
cleaniac
slushcube
~~stickellection~~

Answers on page 42.

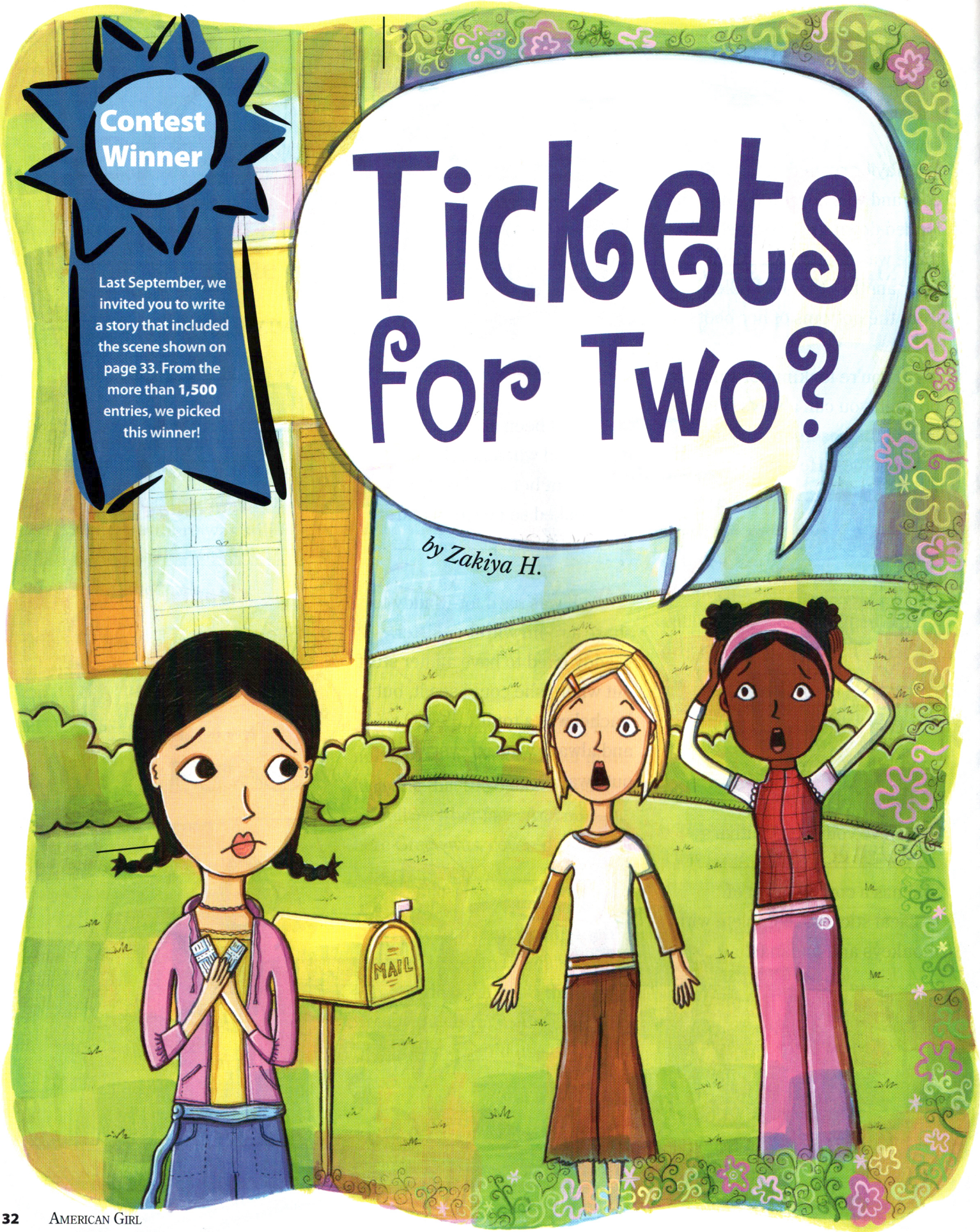
New terms get added to dictionaries all the time. One new one: brain freeze!

Contest Winner

Last September, we invited you to write a story that included the scene shown on page 33. From the more than **1,500** entries, we picked this winner!

Tickets for Two?

by Zakiya H.



Ally has to decide which means more—her favorite band, or her best friend.

"You think we got anything from them today?" Jessie asked.

"I don't think so," Mia responded sadly. "Those concert tickets probably went to somebody whose poem was better than one of ours—"

"No way," I interrupted calmly as we turned onto Maple Drive, our street. It was a quiet, dead-end road with peaceful houses.

"Well, just so you know, Ally," Jessie said, "I really hope you win the tickets. Mia and I both know that you want them more."

Which was true. I had loved Girl Talk, the most popular girl group around, since they came out with their first song. I was a devoted fan, with pictures of the four teen singers on my walls and in my math binder. But it was still nice of Jessie, my best friend since daycare, to say it anyway.

Mia nodded in agreement and kicked a stone into a rain gutter. She'd become a part of Jessie's and my twosome in the second grade. "Yeah, Jessie's right," Mia said. "But it won't make any difference, because if one of us did win the tickets to see Girl Talk we'd be able to invite the others. I'm assuming they're sending three."

Our three houses came into view one by one as we got closer. The colonial buildings were all next to each other, plain and boring.

"Time for the daily mailbox check," I shouted as we went to our mailboxes. "One…two…three!"

We pulled down the doors and reached in to grab the envelopes and magazines.

"Bills, bills, magazine, bills…" Jessie droned as she filed through her mail.

"Hey, I got something!" I shouted, pulling out an envelope with the address of my fave radio station, WGRL 105, on it.

"Me, too!" Jessie and Mia yelled back.

My heart pulsed ten times faster than usual as I pushed my finger through the seal. I reached in, in search of tickets, when Mia let out a high-pitched scream that rattled my eardrums and I dropped the paper.



Jessie and I rushed to her side to see her holding tickets and a letter. "Dear Mia Ramsey," she read aloud, "The people here at WGRL 105 are pleased to inform you that your poem has been selected as the winner of our poetry contest! Enclosed are two tickets to see Girl Talk and here's a bonus—backstage passes! We hope you have a great time at the concert, and thanks for entering!" She put aside the envelope and shrieked, "Isn't that GREAT?"

Illustrations: Jennifer Kalis



I would've been excited with her if I hadn't realized what the letter had said. "Umm, two tickets?" I asked. Jessie's mouth was slightly open, and I could tell she'd noticed the mistake, too.

"Yep!" Mia said. "Two tickets! Isn't that great?"

"No!" Jessie groaned, snatching the tickets from Mia. "Do the math: three of us. Two tickets."

A look of despair and disappointment washed over Mia's face. "Oh. Right. Well...I'll pick one of you."

"But which one?" I asked, my mouth going dry.

"You go," Jessie said to me, even though I knew she probably wanted to go almost as badly as I did. "Their pictures are all over your room." She handed me the tickets.

"Yeah, but you have every single one of their CDs," I protested, giving them back.

"That's only because you were always borrowing them from the library," Jessie responded, shoving the tickets into my hand again. "I get an allowance."

"Look, guys, I can't decide on which one of you now," Mia sighed. "So I'm gonna go home and decide what to wear to the concert." She took the tickets from me and disappeared through her front door.

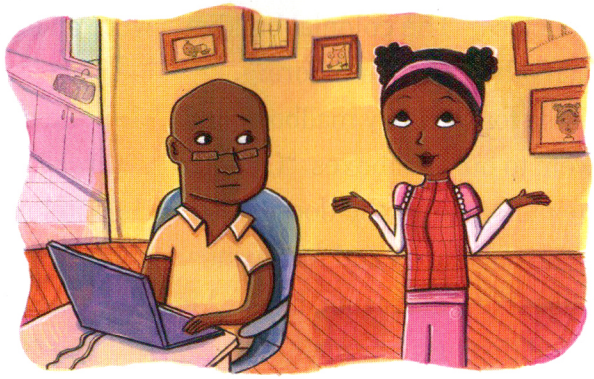
I stared at Jessie in silence, and she stared back. Could Girl Talk ruin our friendship?

"And so Mia has two Girl Talk tickets and she doesn't know if she should give me the ticket or Jessie," I complained to Dad as he typed away on his computer.

"Hmm, sounds like she's in quite a spot, huh? Just remember, you've been friends with Jessie much longer than you've liked Girl Talk," he said, not looking up from his glowing screen.

"I guess," I replied, chewing on a nail. I suddenly stopped, remembering I was trying to make them grow past the white part this time, and shoved my hands into my pockets. "Anyways, I'm going to call Mia right now and invite her over to our pool for tomorrow, if that's O.K."

He nodded. Then, for the first time in the conversation, he looked at me. "You're not by any



chance bribing her, are you?" he asked.

I sighed, as if the thought had never crossed my mind. "Bribing her? Nope, that's silly. I'm just…letting her know I'm the right choice."

Dad gave me a sly smile, showing he wasn't completely convinced. "Sounds like bribing to me." And he continued to click away at his computer.

"Hey, if people running for office can do it, so can I," I retorted, and left the room.

"Hey, Mia! What's up?" I said into the phone a few minutes later.

"Ally! Hi!" she replied in a happy voice. I could tell she was still thrilled about the Girl Talk concert.

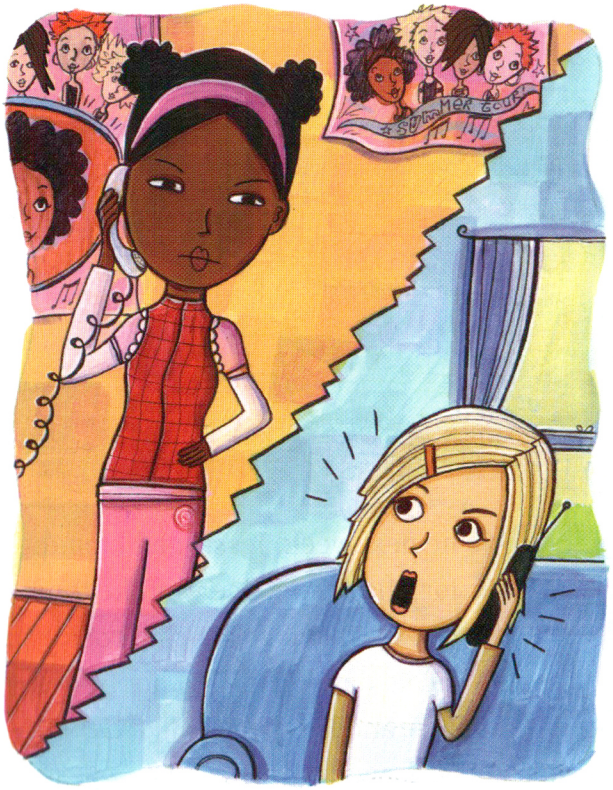
"So, I was wondering if you wanted to come over to my pool tomorrow after school," I said hopefully, winding and unwinding the phone cord around my left index finger.

I was shocked at how angry my voice sounded.

"Shoot. Sorry, Ally, but Jessie already invited me to go to the movies after school tomorrow. Can I take a rain check?"

"Uh, sure," I said, outraged. How could Jessie do that? She was totally buying Mia so that she'd pick her for the concert. "Maybe next week, then? Since the concert isn't until two weeks from now?"

"Sounds great, except not next Monday or



Tuesday, because Jessie and I are sleeping over at each other's houses."

"Oh. Fine," I said. "Well, I'll talk to you later, O.K.? Bye."

"Bye."

I slammed the phone down. Jessie had beaten me to the punch, and Mia was pretty much booked. All because Jessie was bribing her.

I picked up the phone and dialed Jessie's number, ready to exchange a few words. Jessie picked up on the first ring.

"Hello, Mia?"

"No. Ally. So, I heard about your little bribe," I said coldly.

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me," I said. I was shocked at how angry my voice sounded.

"I'm not bribing her," Jessie said.

"Oh, right. Whatever."

"Look, I don't have time for this." Jessie hung up.

"Ugh!" I said.



The next week, Jessie and I fought for Mia's time. She was like the last warm chocolate-chip cookie on a cold day. We invited her places, bought her things, and laughed at all of her not-so-funny jokes. Jessie and I were no longer speaking, giving each other the cold shoulder in the hallways at school and while we walked up Maple Drive.

My face hardened, and I turned to run into my house.

The day before the concert, as we were about to go our separate ways, Mia stopped us. "I've made a decision," she told us.

Jessie leaned forward, anxious. My ears perked up, too.

"I've picked…Lana."

"Lana?" we said in unison. "Who's Lana?"

"My cousin," Mia said. "She's totally neutral, and this way you guys won't have to bite each other's heads off. 'K?"

Jessie and I just stood there. We couldn't have been any more surprised if she'd told us she was going to be the star of a new TV show.

Mia decided to answer her own question. "'K," she said perkily, and she left us standing there, as she had two weeks before.

My face hardened, and I turned to run into my house. "Wait!" Jessie stopped me. "Look. I'm…I'm sorry, Ally."

A flush of emotions ran through me—hurt, sadness, remembrance, forgiveness, love. And I remembered everything we'd been through together, all the laughs and all the good times. And I realized that no number of Girl Talk tickets could change any of that. Dad had been right—we had been best friends longer than we'd loved Girl Talk. "Me, too," I said.

"I guess we just went crazy, huh?" Jessie smiled guiltily, brushing back her golden hair.

"I know. How could we be so stupid, to be bribing Mia because of a dumb Girl Talk ticket? Looking back on it, it's just so embarrassing," I admitted. Then I had an idea. "Hey, why don't you sleep over tomorrow night? You know, while Mia's at the Girl Talk concert."

"Awesome idea!" Jessie exclaimed, grinning even wider. "I'll bring all my Girl Talk CDs and we can listen to them all night long."

"Great! See you later."



"All right. Bye!" And we ran to our houses.

Dad was sitting in the computer room again, typing on his computer. "How was your day?" he asked, staring at whatever he was working on.

"Spectacular," I said with a huge smile. "Jessie's sleeping over tomorrow night."

"That's good news, but what about the Girl Talk concert?"

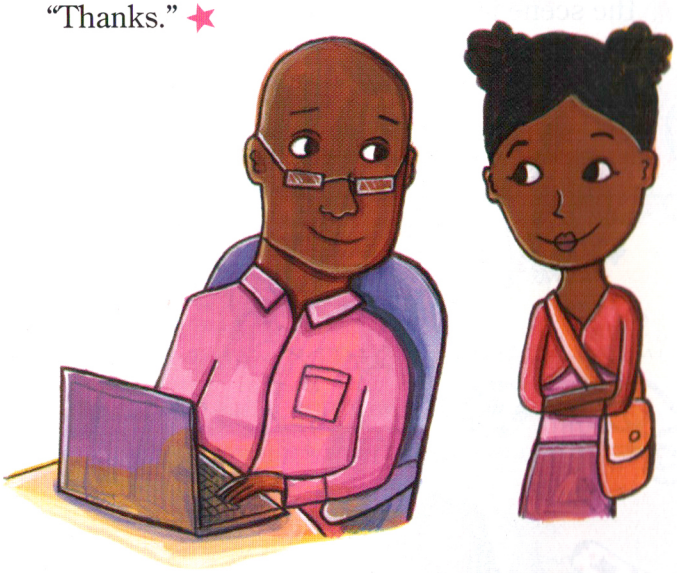
"Oh. Well, Mia's taking her cousin Lana. It all worked out for the best, I guess."

"Good."

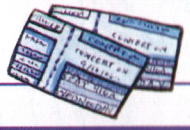
"Yep. Oh, and Dad?"

"Mmmhmmm?"

"Thanks." ★



Meet the Author





Zakiya H.

I love writing stories, especially ones about problems that can happen anytime, anywhere, to anyone. I like reading stories that I can relate to!

Zakiya, age 13, lives in Connecticut

Honorable mentions

Liddy C.
Age 11, Maine

Emma D.
Age 11, Canada

Amy F.
Age 12, Massachusetts

Rachel M.
Age 12, Louisiana

Sara M.
Age 10, Maine

Kelsey P.
Age 12, Alaska

Victoria O.
Age 13, North Carolina

Meredith S.
Age 13, Nebraska

New Story Contest!

It's time for another story contest. Here are the rules:

1. Write a story that includes this line: "When she looked in the mirror, she couldn't *believe* what they had done to her hair."

2. Your story should take place in January or February. All characters in your story must be original creations.

3. Include your first and last name, address, phone number, and birth date. You and your parent must sign your story, stating that you made it up.

4. Your story shouldn't be longer than five handwritten pages or three typed pages.

5. Mail your story to the address on page 2 by June 10. Winners will appear in the January/February 2007 issue.

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Super Sports

What a mess! Help these girls sort out their mixed-up sports equipment. Use pennies to cover each item. With a friend, take turns removing two pennies to find matching items. If you uncover two things that are the same, keep the pennies and take another turn. If you uncover two different things, cover them back up and let your friend take a turn. Whoever has the most pennies when the scene is cleared wins the game.



Photo Fun

Renée R., age 10, from California sent in this photo of her team. Look in the word search below to find things in the photo. Words run across, up, down, backward, and diagonally. Leftover letters reading from top to bottom will spell out what sport this team plays!



~~buds~~	team
~~bottle~~	tree
~~coaches~~	shirt
~~girls~~	smiles
~~red~~	sunglasses
~~Renée~~	

S	U	N	G	L	A	S	S	E	S
E	R	S	H	I	R	T	E	L	V
L	E	E	O	L	R	N	L	T	B
I	E	R	D	Y	E	L	B	T	U
M	A	E	T	R	A	L	S	O	D
S	E	H	C	A	O	C	L	B	S

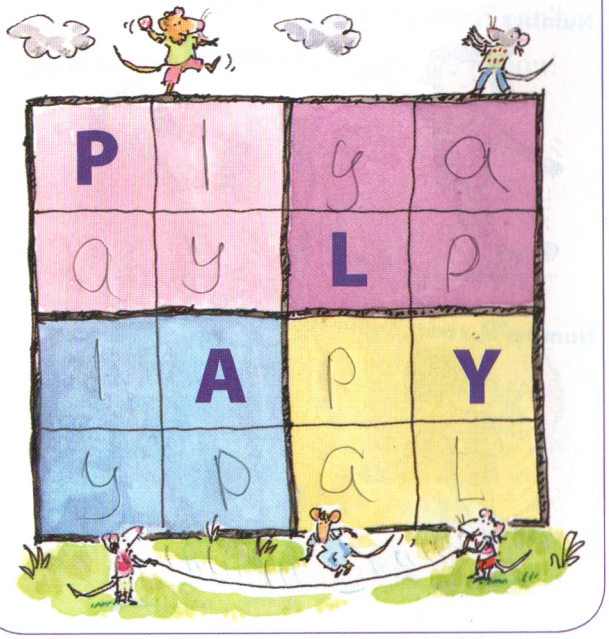




The sport is: V o l l y B a l l

Go Play

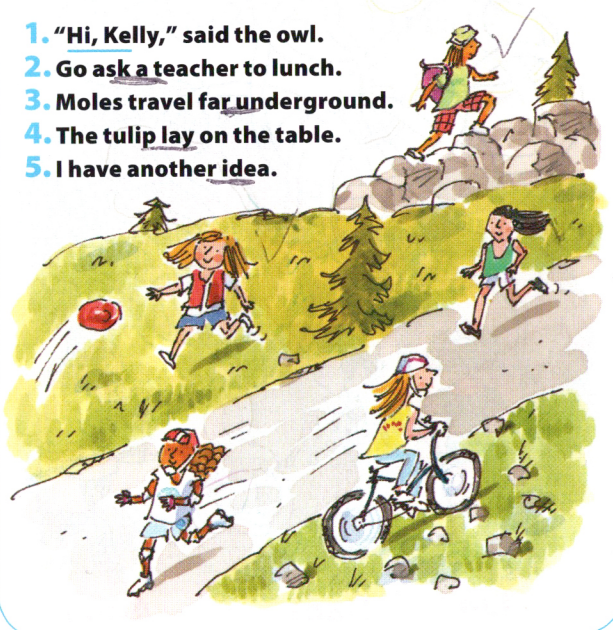
Write the letters P, L, A, and Y into each square so that each row, column, and colored box uses every letter once.



Hide & Seek

These silly sentences are filled with fun things you can do outside. Can you find the hidden words? We did the first one for you.

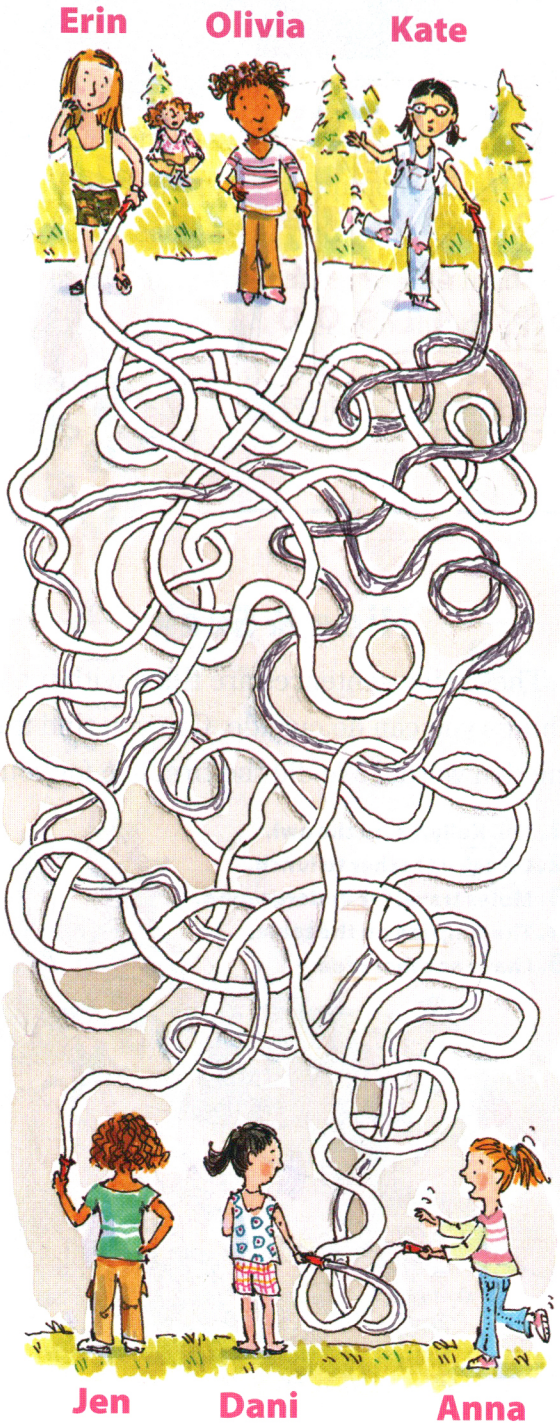
1. **"Hi, Kelly," said the owl.**
2. **Go ask a teacher to lunch.**
3. **Moles travel far underground.**
4. **The tulip lay on the table.**
5. **I have another idea.**



Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Jumbled Ropes

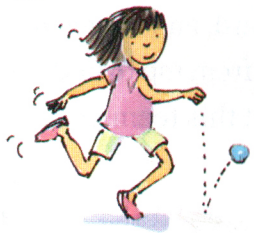
These girls got all tangled up on the playground. Follow the ropes to figure out which girls are in each pair. Hint: Use a different colored pen to follow each rope!



Have a Ball!

Act out this rhyme while you bounce a ball.

Number 1, time to run.



Number 2, touch your shoe.



Number 3, slap your knee.



Number 4, wipe the floor.



Number 5, take a drive.



Number 6, do some kicks.



Number 7, go to heaven.



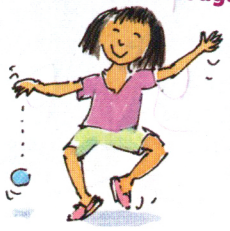
Number 8, clean your plate.



Number 9, scratch your spine.



Number 10, start again!



Hopspiral

Try this twist on an old favorite.



1. Use chalk to draw a spiral hopscotch path. Give each player a stone.
2. Players take turns tossing stones into the squares and hopping, just as in regular hopscotch. But in this version, players hop only on one foot!
3. When a player gets to the safety zone, she lands on two feet and jumps once to turn around. Then she hops back out on her other foot.
4. The first player to throw her stone into square 10 and hop all the way in and out wins. Don't get dizzy!

Goofy Foot

While sitting, lift your right leg and start moving your foot in clockwise circles. Then use your right pointer finger to draw a number 6 in the air. Bet you can't stop your foot from changing direction!



Art Sleuth

Search the pages of this issue to find where each snippet of the photo or illustration shown below came from. Write the page number where you found it.

1. 4



Laffateria

What did the horse wear to the beach?



Clip-clops

Marjorie A.
Age 10, New York

What should you give an alligator that needs help?



Gator-aid

Cherea S.
Age 13, Florida

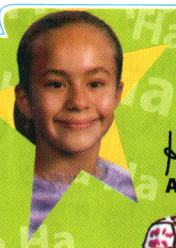
What is the laziest mountain called?



Mount Ever-rest!

Lauren W.
Age 12, Texas

What kind of dance class do sheep take?



*Baa*llet

Hannah M.
Age 12, Illinois

What is hardest to catch when you run your fastest?



Your breath

Lauren S.
Age 13, Massachusetts

Funny Business

Want to be in AG magazine? Send your best jokes to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.

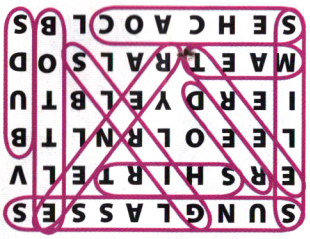




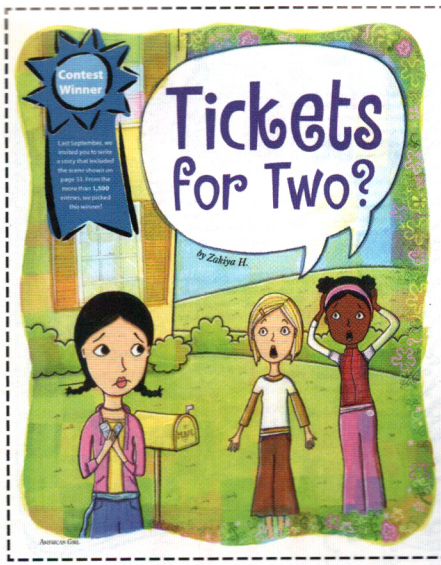
Answer Box

Photo Fun

The sport is volleyball.

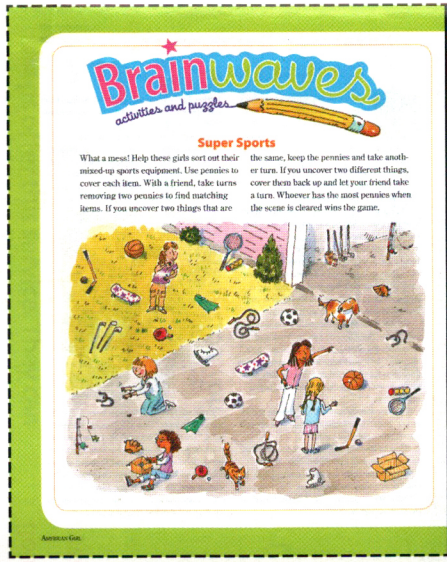


Illustrations: Susan McAliley





A



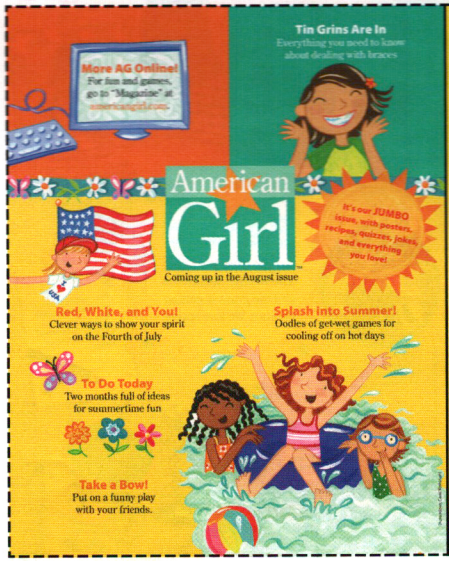


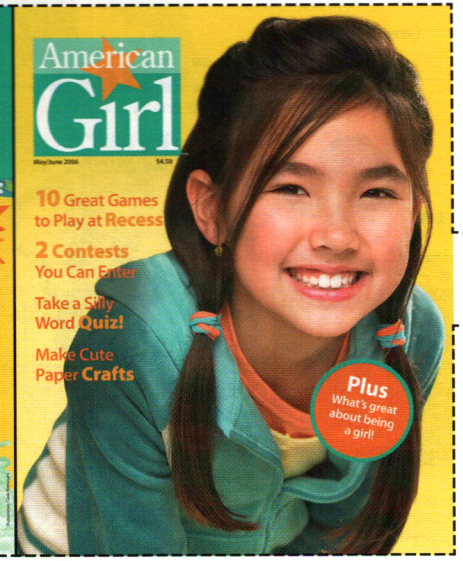
B





C





D

Mini Mag

With the Mini Mag, you can make a miniature copy of *American Girl*. All you need are scissors and a stapler. Read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1 Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.



2 Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.



Continued

Craft

Paper Petals

by Patricia Doherty

Make pretty projects with paper to give as gifts on Mother's Day or to keep for yourself!

Dinky Daisies

To brighten someone's day, punch out a bitty bouquet.

You will need:

- An adult to help you
- Tiny flower paper punch
- Hole punch
- Colored paper or vellum
- Double-stick tape
- Scissors
- Green jewelry wire
- Tiny bottle or jar

1. Punch out a flower and a circle from paper or vellum. Tape the circle to the flower. Ask an adult to help you cut wire for a stem. At one end of the wire, make a small bend. Tape the bend underneath the flower. Make more flowers, and slip them into a tiny bottle or jar for a vase.

Tip: Keep stems straight or curl them around a pencil.

Contest Winner

Ally has to decide which means more—her favorite band, or her best friend.

"You think we got anything from them today?" Jessie asked.

"I don't think so," Mia responded sadly. "Those concert tickets probably went to somebody whose poem was better than one of ours—"

"No way," I interrupted calmly as we turned onto Maple Drive, our street. It was a quiet, dead-end road with peaceful houses.

"Well, just so you know, Ally," Jessie said, "I really hope you win the tickets. Mia and I both know that you want them more."

Which was true. I had loved Girl Talk, the most popular girl group around, since they came out with their first song. I was a devoted fan, with pictures of the four teen singers on my walls and in my math binder. But it was still nice of Jessie, my best friend since daycare, to say it anyway.

Mia nodded in agreement and kicked a stone into a rain gutter. She'd become a part of Jessie's and my twosome in the second grade. "Yeah, Jessie's right," Mia said. "But it won't make any difference, because if one of us did win the tickets to see Girl Talk we'd be able to invite the others. I'm assuming they're sending three."

Our three houses came into view one by one as we got closer. The colonial buildings were all next to each other, plain and boring.

"Time for the daily mailbox check," I shouted as we went to our mailboxes. "One…two…three!"

We pulled down the doors and reached in to grab the envelopes and magazines.

"Bills, bills, magazine, bills…" Jessie droned as she filed through her mail.

"Hey, I got something!" I shouted, pulling out an envelope with the address of my fave radio station, WGRL 105, on it.

"Me, too!" Jessie and Mia yelled back.

My heart pulsed ten times faster than usual as I pushed my finger through the seal. I reached in, in search of tickets, when Mia let out a high-pitched scream that rattled my eardrums and I dropped the paper.



Jessie and I rushed to her side to see her holding tickets and a letter. "Dear Mia Ramsey," she read aloud, "The people here at WGRL 105 are pleased to inform you that your poem has been selected as the winner of our poetry contest! Enclosed are two tickets to see Girl Talk and here's a bonus—backstage passes! We hope you have a great time at the concert, and thanks for entering!" She put aside the envelope and shrieked, "Isn't that GREAT!"

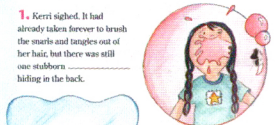
Quiz

Take a Squiz!

Readers sent in the funny new words on the opposite page. Use them to complete each made-up sentence in our squiz (silly quiz).

By Elena B., OLIVIA V., Emily P., Christan T., Jordan O., Cassie P., Haley G., Danielle B., Courtney B., and Sophie C.

1. Kerri sighed. It had already taken forever to brush the snarls and tangles out of her hair, but there was still one stubborn _____ hiding in the back.



2. Grace's mom kept telling her not to blow bubbles with her gum, insisting that the bubbles would pop all over her face. And now here Grace was, covered with _____!

3. Instead of cutting through the gym to get to the cafeteria, Hannah decided to go the long way by the library. After all, she thought, she could use the _____.

4. Kirstie had a whole notebook of drawings and doodles, so she decided to make a collage out of all the art. It turned out great, so she decided to hang the _____ inside her locker.

5. Jamie hated going to the pizza parlor because all the screaming kids drove her nuts. That place was so _____!

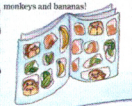


6. Taylor rushed in from the cold and was horrified when she looked down. All over the hall, there was one _____ after another that had fallen from the bottoms of her boots.

7. If you're looking for Emma's brother, you can always find him in the basement playing video games. He's such a _____.



8. Have you seen Caitlyn's _____? She has a complete set of tropical stickers, complete with monkeys and bananas!



9. It had been snowing for hours, and when Sarah Rose looked out her window, the yard looked so peaceful and _____.

10. It was hard for Maddy to share a room with her sister. Maddy liked to have all her stuff out where she could see it, but Rachel was a total _____ and always wanted everything put away.



Funny word choices:

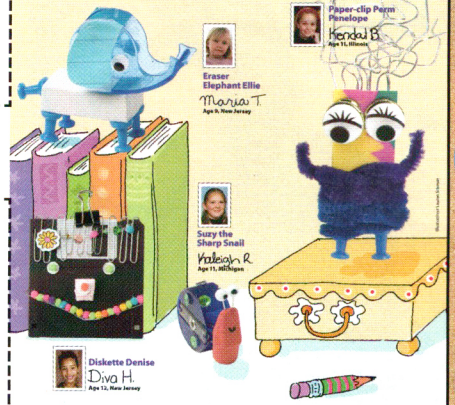
videotato
annoisy
flubbabubba
snangle
snowrene
drawlage
extracise
cleaniac
slushcube
stickellaction

Answers on page 42

Contest

Creative Critters

We give these school-supply creatures an A+!

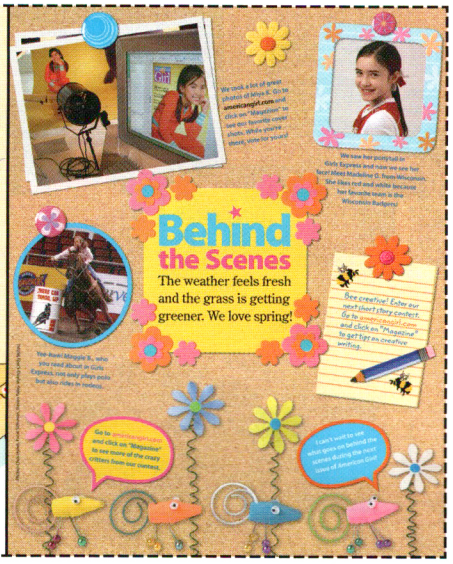


Paper-clip Perm Penelope
Kendal B.
Age 11, Illinois

Eraser Elephant Ellie
Maria T.
Age 9, New Jersey

Suzy the Sharp Snail
Kaleigh R.
Age 11, Michigan

Diskette Denise
Diva H.
Age 12, New Jersey



Hope & Heart

by Shannon Payette Seip

Last summer, Hurricane Katrina swept through the southern United States, flooding cities and forcing families to flee. You'll meet girls who escaped from the dangerous storm and ended up far from home. You'll also hear from girls who decided to help the storm's victims.



Photo Fun

Renée R., age 10, from California sent in this photo of her team. Look in the word search below to find things in the photo. Words run across, up, down, backward, and diagonally. Leftover letters reading from top to bottom will spell out what sport this team plays!



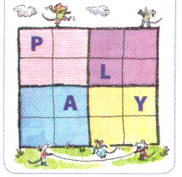
buds, bottle, coaches, girls, red, Renée, team, tree, shirt, smiles, sunglasses

S	U	N	G	L	A	S	S	E	S			
E	R	S	H	I	R	T	E	L	V			
L	E	E	O	L	R	N	L	T	B			
I	E	R	D	Y	E	L	B	T	U			
M	A	E	T	R	A	L	S	O	D			
S	E	H	C	A	O	C	L	B	S			

The sport is: _____

Go Play

Write the letters P, L, A, and Y into each square so that each row, column, and colored box uses every letter once.



Hide & Seek

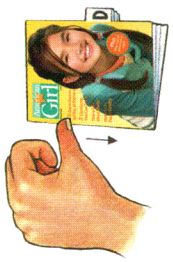
These silly sentences are filled with fun things you can do outside. Can you find the hidden words? We did the first one for you.

1. **"Hi, Kelly," said the owl.**
2. **Go ask a teacher to lunch.**
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4. **The tulip lay on the table.**
5. **I have another idea.**

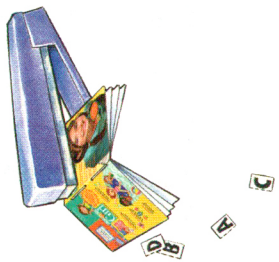


Mini Mag

3 Fold the stacks of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the magazine should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.



4 Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!



HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

I am afraid of my bike. Two years ago, I had a huge wreck, and I had to have surgery on my leg. What should I do?

afraid

Don't let your accident stop you from having a lifetime of fun on your bike. Ask your parents to get your bicycle tuned up. Many bike shops offer this service. They can make sure your bike is the right size for you and that your tires and brakes are in good shape. They might have advice for a safe place to ride, too. When you're ready to ride, put on your helmet and find someplace flat to start, even if it means being driven to a bike trail or park. Start slow and ride a little more each time. Once you feel confident, you'll like your bike again.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

Sometimes I get sassy with my mom. I can't help it—she makes me that way. What should I do?

Sassy

First things first—no one can *make* you sassy. What comes out of your mouth is up to you. The way to stop sassing is to think about what you're going to say *before* you say it, and imagine how your mom will react. Respond to your mom calmly and quietly—without being sarcastic or rolling your eyes—and ask your mom to do the same.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I play soccer for a very competitive club. For the past two years, I've always made my club's top team. But this year they cut me and sent me down to the second-best team. It really hurts.

Cut

Instead of thinking you don't measure up, focus on the positive. You're bound to be one of the better players on your new team. Your new coach might also have a different way of teaching skills, which could be good for you. Let her know you want to play your very best, and ask her to help you improve. If you don't act like this will be a second-rate experience, it won't be.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

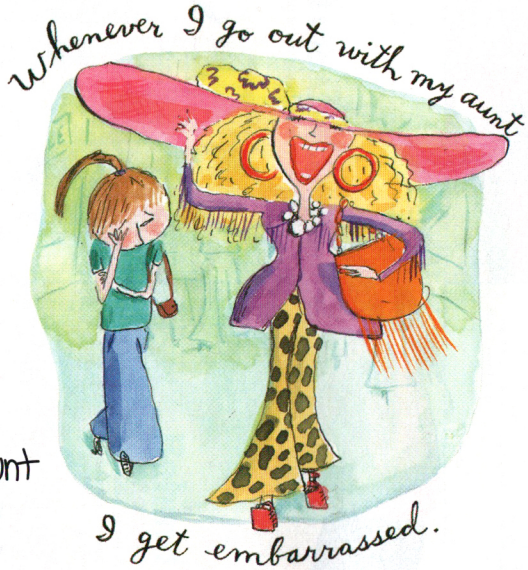
Yesterday, I went on the Internet, and I saw something really bad. What I saw is haunting me! How can I be able to tell what's good and bad on the Net *before* I watch it, not after?

YIKES!

Seeing something awful on the Internet can be really upsetting. It might seem like what you saw will be burned into your brain forever, but it won't. Next time the image creeps into your thoughts, replace it by thinking of something nicer, such as jumping into a pool. In time, what you saw will haunt you less. Tell your parents what happened, too. They may be able to report it. Also, see if they can install a filter on your computer to help block out bad stuff. Filters can't block everything, though, so stick to sites you know are safe, and open e-mails only from people you know well.

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

Whenever I go out with my aunt, I get embarrassed because she wears funky clothes and people stare at us.

I Have an Embarrassing Aunt

So what if your aunt has a funky sense of style? She probably enjoys the attention she gets, so try not to let it bother you. At least be proud that she thinks for herself. You might never dress like your aunt, but if you grow up to be someone who thinks for herself, you won't be afraid to show your style, either.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I feel guilty keeping a diary. Every night I write in it, and then I regret writing what I did. I even had to change names when I was explaining my friend problems. Help!

Guilty Writer

The best thing about having a diary is that it's a private place to record your thoughts and feelings. You don't have to feel guilty about using one. In fact, writing about things such as friendship problems in a diary can help you sort them out and even come up with solutions. But you do have to keep your diary private. If you think there's a chance someone might read it, using fake names isn't a bad idea.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

My best friend is having her birthday party on the same day I am. She sent out her invitations sooner than I did. This is my tenth birthday—my first double-digit party—and I wanted to make it special. But how can I if no one shows up?

Birthdazed

There are a couple of things you could do. Since it's your first double-digit birthday, why not have a double party with your friend? Talk it over with your mom and then see if your friend would mind sharing her date. A party with two birthday girls could be twice as fun, and everyone could have two slices of cake! Plus, that way the guests wouldn't have to choose one party over another. You could also just have your party later—either later in the day, or a whole week later. If you've already sent the invitations, you could follow up with a phone call to each guest to let her know the new info. If you are willing to change your plans a little bit, you can still have a great party.

★

Advice from You

"If someone is making fun of you, say, 'Oh, I get it. You're trying to be funny. Well, maybe someday you'll succeed.' I said that, and the teasers backed off."

Marjorie A.
Age 10, New York

Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



We took a lot of great photos of Miya K. Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" to see our favorite cover shots. While you're there, vote for yours!



We saw her ponytail in Girls Express and now we see her face! Meet Madeline G. from Wisconsin. She likes red and white because her favorite team is the Wisconsin Badgers!

Behind the Scenes

The weather feels fresh and the grass is getting greener. We love spring!



Yee-haw! Maggie B., who you read about in Girls Express, not only plays polo but also rides in rodeos.

Bee creative! Enter our next short story contest. Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" to get tips on creative writing.

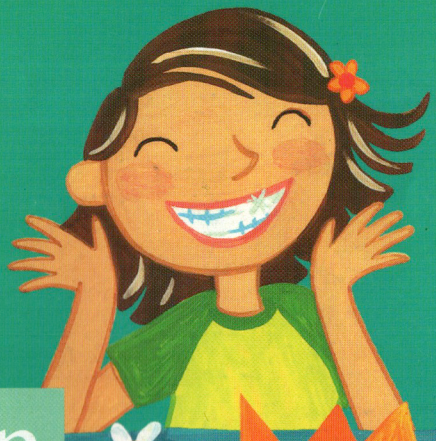
Go to americangirl.com and click on "Magazine" to see more of the crazy critters from our contest.

I can't wait to see what goes on behind the scenes during the next issue of American Girl!

Photo Credit: Jamie Kelly/Central Beach Valley Stables, Costa Mesa

Tin Grins Are In

Everything you need to know about dealing with braces



More AG Online!

For fun and games, go to "Magazine" at americangirl.com.

American Girl™

It's our JUMBO issue, with posters, recipes, quizzes, jokes, and everything you love!



Coming up in the July/August issue

Red, White, and You!

Clever ways to show your spirit on the Fourth of July

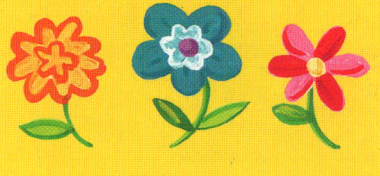
Splash into Summer!

Oodles of get-wet games for cooling off on hot days



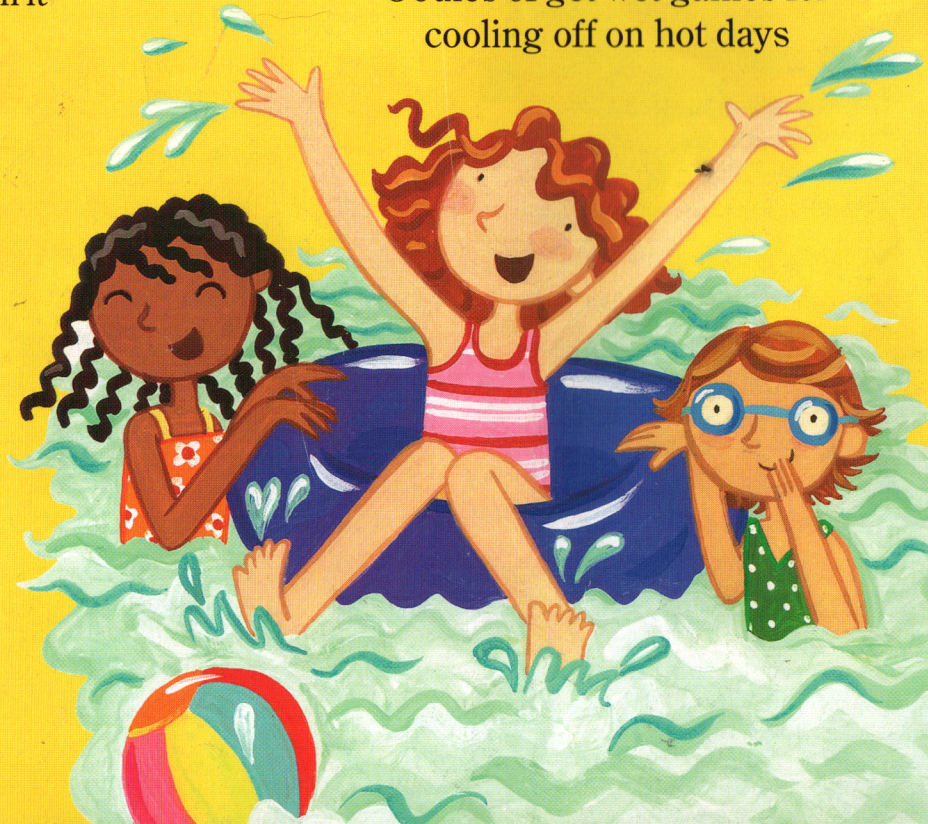
To Do Today

Two months full of ideas for summertime fun



Take a Bow!

Put on a funny play with your friends.



AG's Photo Bookmarks

Attach a photo of yourself to each of these bookmarks and give as a gift to someone special on Mother's Day or Father's Day.



1. Cut out a bookmark from the page. Remove the shape from the top of the bookmark and glue it to the bottom for decoration.



Back of bookmark Front of bookmark

2. Place a picture beneath the fold of the bookmark and hold it in place with a piece of tape. Fold over on the dotted line.



3. Use glue to attach sides of the bookmark frame. Hold in place and let dry. Fill in blanks with nice thoughts.



Ways you make me happy

_____

_____

_____

Reasons I love you

_____

_____

_____

Wishes for you

_____

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